

THESE MINUTES ARE NOT OFFICIAL
UNTIL APPROVED BY THE
CULVER CITY
SUSTAINABILITY SUBCOMMITTEE
OF THE CITY COUNCIL

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
CULVER CITY SUSTAINABILITY
SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE CITY COUNCIL
CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA

March 23, 2023
6:00 p.m.

Call to Order & Roll Call

Vice Mayor McMorris called the special meeting of the Sustainability Subcommittee of the City Council to order at 6:05 p.m. in the Dan Patacchia Meeting Room at City Hall and via Webex.

Present: Yasmine-Imani McMorris, Vice Mayor
Freddy Puza, Council Member

Staff Present: Yanni Demitri, Public Works (PW) Director
Sean Singletary, Environmental Programs
Operations (EPO) Manager
Daniel Pankau, PW-EPO Management Analyst
Alicia Ide, PW Management Analyst

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Pledge of Allegiance

The Sustainability Subcommittee recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

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Items from Subcommittee Members/Staff

Vice Mayor McMorris reported on Civic Well, an organization focusing on energy and sustainability, and she asked staff to look into the benefits of having Culver City join.

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Public Comment - Items NOT On the Agenda

Vice Mayor McMorris invited public comment.

The following members of the public addressed the Subcommittee:

Karim Sahli discussed the IPCC (International Panel on Climate Change); the worsening situation with little time to act; the need to adapt to changes already happening; tools and knowledge to combat climate change; cars as being responsible for 29% of greenhouse gas (ghg) emissions in Culver City; the need to reduce the number of vehicle miles travelled (VMT); the importance of supporting MOVE Culver City; and he asked that the City not be climate change deniers.

Patricia McPherson, Grass Roots Coalition, discussed Ballona Wetlands; the groundwater dependent eco-system; Department of Fish and Wildlife plans to divert water; water thrown out to sea; litigation of illegal drains on the site; the Coastal Commission determination of violations with regard to the Wetlands; the need for Culver City to participate in Groundwater Sustainability Agency meetings; helping to protect Ballona aquifers classified by the Water Board as potential drinking water; the Sustainable Water Management Act; the efforts of Santa Monica; and the need to protect greenspaces and wetlands.

Alicia Ide, Management Analyst, indicated that there would be another opportunity to make public comment at the end of the meeting.

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Receipt and File Correspondence

Alicia Ide, Management Analyst, indicated that correspondence had been distributed.

MOVED BY COUNCIL MEMBER PUZA, SECONDED BY VICE MAYOR MCMORRIN AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, THAT THE SUSTAINABILITY SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE CITY COUNCIL RECEIVE AND FILE CORRESPONDENCE.

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Order of the Agenda

Item A-2 was considered after Item A-6.

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Consent Calendar

Item C-1

Approval of Minutes for the Sustainability Subcommittee Special Meeting on November 29, 2022

MOVED BY VICE MAYOR MCMORRIN, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER PUZA AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, THAT THE SUSTAINABILITY SUBCOMMITTEE APPROVE MINUTES FOR THE SPECIAL MEETING OF NOVEMBER 29, 2022.

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Agenda Items

Item A-1

Receive and Discuss a Presentation Regarding Culver City's Blue Bin Recycling Efforts and General Overview of How and What Materials are Accepted by Industrial Processor (Athens Services)

Daniel Pankau, PW-EPO Management Analyst, introduced the item.

Sharon Shapiro-Fox, Athens Services, provided background on the organization; discussed the state of recycling; commitment to the environment; international policies; commodity pricing; processing of Culver City recyclables; 2022 recycling composition; China's impact on the world's scrap; a timeline of China's policies and reactions;

contamination limits; shifts of material flow away from China; factors that affect pricing; scrap import policy; and ways to improve recycling.

Discussion ensued between Ms. Shapiro-Fox, staff, and Subcommittee Members regarding the educational component; use of a separate processor for organics; the focus of outreach to commercial and multi-family properties; the Recycle Coach app; and distribution of an additional City mailer with information.

Vice Mayor McMorris invited public comment.

The following members of the public addressed the Subcommittee:

Deborah Gregory, Ballona Creek Renaissance (BCR), expressed appreciation for the presentation; observed that efforts were not being made to solve the problem, but rather the issue was being moved from country to country; and she emphasized the importance of solving the issue.

Sandrine Cassidy, BCR, discussed work on a Green Video project while serving as Sustainability Coordinator for the Culver City Unified School District (CCUSD); plans to highlight the Recycling Coach; sharing information on Athens Services; positive marketing; the return to the community; and she received clarification regarding the organics program with Athens Services.

Sharon Shapiro-Fox, Athens Services, acknowledged concerns voiced about "kicking the can down the road"; she commended the City for their local legislative efforts; discussed changes to purchasing and usage habits; and she indicated willingness to set up a Recycling Materials Recovery Facilities (MRF) tour.

Discussion ensued between Ms. Shapiro-Fox, staff, and Subcommittee Members regarding glass markets; frequency of recycling characterization studies; the amount of stuff put into recycling bins that goes into landfill vs. what is actually recycled into a different product; waste product produced by restaurants; processors vs. collectors; contamination levels; the City's recycling program; and appreciation for the presentation.

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Item A-3
(Out of Sequence)

Receive and Discuss a Presentation Regarding Amending Culver City Municipal Code (CCMC) Chapter 5.07, Waste Reduction Regulations, to include Prohibition of Single-Use Plastic Beverage Bottles, by the Ballona Creek Renaissance Organization

Deborah Gregory, Ballona Creek Renaissance (BCR), announced that the next clean up event would be on Earth Day, April 22, 2023.

Sandrine Cassidy, BCR, provided background on the organization; thanked the Subcommittee for the ability to present ideas to consider; discussed volunteers; events; trash diverted; work to push policy; success of the plastic ban; seasonal trash; damage to wildlife, the Creek, and the ocean; partnerships; the Interceptor; the multi-faceted issue requiring multi-faceted solutions; and she introduced Craig Cadwallader noting that he is working to change policy throughout the state and around the world.

Craig Cadwallader, BCR, discussed potential modifications to three chapters of the municipal code; 2020 International Coastal Cleanup Day statistics; cigarette butts; plastic beverage bottles; a potential single use plastic bottle ban for all beverages; the actions of other cities to address issues; gaining consistency among cities; alternatives for all beverages; recycle rates for aluminum cans; support for reusable bottles; reusable glass; issues if glass is not recycled; and the time frame to implement the proposed changes after adoption.

Sandrine Cassidy, BCR, acknowledged the current ban on plastic water bottles implemented in City facilities noting that the proposal is an extension to include non-water beverages in plastic.

Craig Cadwallader, BCR, discussed the number of people affected by plastics ordinances in California; lack of evidence of harms to businesses from the proposed changes; maintaining a clean environment and a successful business; and he indicated that he drafted and provided sample ordinances as a tool.

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Item A-4

Receive and Discuss a Presentation Regarding Amending Culver City Municipal Code (CCMC) Chapter 9.11, Smoking Regulations, to Include Prohibition of Smoking Citywide by the Ballona Creek Renaissance Organization

Sandrine Cassidy, Ballona Creek Renaissance, stated that trash in the street ends up in the ocean; discussed the importance of education; mini-markets selling cigarettes around Culver High; and making a difference to families.

Craig Cadwallader, BCR, discussed work being done on tobacco ordinances throughout the state; work on a comprehensive food ware ordinance; the prohibition on tobacco sales in Manhattan Beach and Beverly Hills; free consulting work with the Small Business Administration provided to help businesses switch the product mix away from tobacco products to ensure minimum impact in Manhattan Beach; the importance of a clean, healthy environment to quality of life; the ban passed in Hermosa Beach; public spaces; designated smoking areas; outdoor smoking bans; he proposed that Culver City consider a tobacco sales ban; he indicated that he had provided a red-lined version of existing ordinances to illustrate the proposed changes; discussed northern California vs. Southern California; changes being made by the city of Los Angeles; he indicated that he had been invited to join the UCLA Anti-Vaping Task Force; and he discussed a coalition of organizations working on the tobacco end-game and a tobacco sales ban.

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Item A-5

Receive and Discuss a Presentation Regarding Amending Culver City Municipal Code (CCMC) Chapter 11.16, Plastic Carryout Bag Regulations, to Include the Prohibition of Single-Use Bags Not Preempted by California Public Resources Code, Division 30, Part 3, Chapter 5.3, Article 5, by the Ballona Creek Renaissance Organization

Craig Cadwallader, Ballona Creek Renaissance, discussed pre-emption clauses in the bag ban; expanding the bag ban to cover all areas not preempted by SB 270; ordinances recently adopted

by other cities; misinformation; reusable bags; impacts to food ware ordinances; businesses that do not allow people to bring their own reusables; urban myths; scientific research; California Retail Food Code; and AB 619 dealing with customer reusables.

Sandrine Cassidy, BCR, noted that the presentation in Item A-1 had indicated that plastic bags were ruining the recycling streams.

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Item A-6

Receive and Discuss a Presentation Regarding Amending Culver City Municipal Code (CCMC) Chapter 5.07, Waste Reduction Regulations, to Include Prohibition of the Use and Sale of Balloons, by the Ballona Creek Renaissance Organization

Craig Cadwallader, Ballona Creek Renaissance, discussed rules about mylar balloons; issues with latex balloons; dangers of ribbons on balloons; expanding the original ban; beach cities that have adopted balloon ordinances banning the use and sale of mylar and latex balloons; available alternatives; expansion of the original bans; cities that are leaders; protection of wildlife and sea life; and mitigating shorts in power lines that have caused wildfires.

Discussion ensued between meeting participants, staff, and Subcommittee Members regarding success of the current ban on plastic water bottles in City facilities; grants for hydration stations; reusable containers; people who bring leftover containers to restaurants; reasonable exceptions; education; businesses that want to be good neighbors; fostering goodwill with customers; money saved by restaurants with the changes; net increase in profits; case studies available through ReThink Disposable; grants for plastic-free restaurants; Sustainable Business Certification; replacing plastic bags with recyclable paper bags; state funding; the fact that no businesses have made use of the hardship clause; setting standards for enforcement; finding solutions; the success of using a business-friendly approach and working with businesses; concerns with increased contact with law enforcement related to a smoking ban; decriminalization of the ban; discriminatory enforcement; targeted marketing; health consequences; concern with having something that is supposed to be beneficial used in a negative way; finding

something stronger than paper to use; recommendations made under the original ban; reusable utensils; use of reusable bags; the actions of other cities; promoting usage with the city logo; Earth Day events; and willingness of BCR representatives to share information and assist staff.

Vice Mayor McMorris invited public comment.

The following members of the public addressed the Subcommittee:

Dan Morrill, BCR Advisory Board, applauded the efforts of staff and BCR to work on codes; discussed the need for tools to make things happen to clean up the environment; the amount of plastic dumped into the oceans; the amount of micro-plastics people unknowingly ingest weekly; and he thanked the City for their efforts.

Karim Sahli expressed appreciation for the presentation from BCR and support for the proposed bans and recommendations; he was hopeful about the cigarette ban; and he was looking forward to implementing the recommendations as soon as possible.

David Coles expressed support for all of the proposals; he felt that the "to go" phenomenon was out of control; discussed waste in restaurants; the culture that insists on providing bags to people; the statewide plastic bag ban; violations by grocery stores; the difficulty of reporting violations; minimal action by the state to address violations; the need for citizens to take action themselves to litigate violations; and the amount of plastic recovered in clean ups.

Sandrine Cassidy, BCR, discussed waste reduction regulation as of January 1, 2023 requiring restaurants with dine-in customers to utilize reusables, and she encouraged people to go on the Culver City website to renounce restaurants that do not comply.

Discussion ensued between staff and Subcommittee Members regarding the need for Council direction with regard to a smoking ban and education on the City website.

MOVED BY VICE MAYOR MCMORRIS, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER PUZA AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, THAT THE SUSTAINABILITY SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMEND THAT ITEMS A-3 THROUGH A-6 ADVANCE TO THE CITY COUNCIL FOR DISCUSSION.

Discussion ensued between staff and Subcommittee Members regarding next steps; outreach to businesses for feedback; the importance of community involvement; education; and communication with those impacted.

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Item A-2
(Out of Sequence)

Receive and Discuss a Presentation Regarding the Syd Kronenthal Park Stormwater Capture Project

Sean Singletary, Environmental Programs and Operations Manager, provided a presentation on the Syd Kronenthal Park Stormwater Capture Project; discussed the status of the feasibility study; urban runoff; damage to aquatic life; dangers to humans; the Ballona Creek Watershed; compliance with regulations; regulatory agencies involved; the Stormwater Quality Master Plan; funding; project prioritization; the Technical Resources Program (TRP) Feasibility Grant; the Adams Channel Concept; primary treatment; capture and use; secondary treatment alternatives; infiltration; challenges with putting water back into the water table; diversion to the sewer and routing to Hyperion; recycling; treating the water and re-releasing; estimated project timeline; funding; Measure CW; feedback from Parks, Recreation and Community Services; environmental and permitting; money focused on disadvantaged areas; community partners; history of the City being ahead of the curve; and he provided his contact information and indicated that more information was available on the City website.

Discussion ensued between staff and Subcommittee Members regarding landfill; regional issues; public support; expediting the process; construction funds; Caltrans money; partnerships; collaboration with the City of Los Angeles; jurisdictional issues; the Adams Channel drainage; local vs. regional projects; interest in the area; using the rain for a good purpose; whether park improvements would be part of the process; educational signage; and rain gardens.

Vice Mayor McMorris invited public comment.

The following member of the public addressed the Subcommittee:

David Coles expressed opposition to the project; urged Subcommittee Members to bring in alternate proposals; referenced a speaker who addressed the Subcommittee a few years ago with a very different approach that was much less dependent on adding concrete and building new artificial infrastructure and was much cheaper; he noted that nature did the best job of capturing and cleaning storm water; discussed conversion of school playgrounds and City parking lots of into permeable paving; providing an incentive program for people to replace their driveways with permeable surfaces; felt that the project would be ripped out by future generations who want to restore the environment; asserted that one could not have a functioning ecosystem with concrete buried underneath it; and he asked the Subcommittee to bring in other experts with a different approach.

Discussion ensued between staff and Subcommittee Members regarding appreciation for the public comment; tools to achieve compliance; projects that move the City closer to the goals; funding; and the Master Plan process.

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Public Comment for Items NOT on the Agenda

Vice Mayor McMorris invited public participation.

The following member of the public addressed the Subcommittee:

David Coles discussed concern with the priority placed on parking enforcement vs. environmental enforcement; the importance of enforcement; compliance; staff response to his reports; lack of enforcement of local ordinances; leaf blower violations; ensuring adequate resources are allocated to enforcement; and concern with “feel good” legislation.

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Items from Subcommittee Members/Staff

Discussion ensued between staff and Subcommittee Members regarding meeting frequency; potential meeting dates; inviting large companies in the City to provide presentations

on their sustainability practices; the Sustainability Certificate Program; and small vs. large businesses.

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Adjournment

There being no further business, at 8:19 p.m., the Sustainability Subcommittee of the City Council adjourned to a meeting to be held on May 11, 2023.

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Jeremy Bocchino
SECRETARY of the Culver City Sustainability Subcommittee of
the City Council Culver City, California

APPROVED

Yasmine-Imani McMorrin
VICE MAYOR, Sustainability Subcommittee of the City Council
Culver City, California